

But we passed a bill out of the Commerce Committee on a 20-0 vote. The majority leader is a member of that committee. He supported it. All Republican members had an opportunity to amend it, as well as those on the other side of the aisle.

I would like to repeat; I have a letter from the Secretary of Transportation. In the last paragraph, he says:

Most important, however, is expeditious action on comprehensive legislation that will strengthen NHTSA's ability to address life-threatening motor vehicle safety defects. I will work with you in any way I can to help shape legislation the Congress can approve and the President can sign into law.

Sincerely, Rodney Slater.

Mr. President, the Members of the House of Representatives are here to meet with me. They just passed a bill through the House, 42-0, from their committee.

They are prepared to take it to the floor of the House on Tuesday, is my understanding from Chairman TAUZIN and Congressman Upton. Congressman UPTON, by the way, as we all know, is from a State where the vehicles under question are manufactured and one of the reasons he has taken a lead role here.

I hope we can get this agreement. I emphasize again my commitment to the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Alabama, to work with him on serious concerns that he has about this issue. I assure the Senator from Alabama, again, my respect for him, his experience as former attorney general of his State, and I believe his views and his input will be very important.

Also, in this unanimous consent request, there is no time limit and only relevant amendments are in order. It would be fairly easy, the way the Senate works, in the remaining days—because my understanding is now we will not be back until next Wednesday—it would be fairly easy to block this legislation, although I certainly hope that will not be the case.

Again, I thank the Senator from Alabama for his consideration of this issue.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it now be in order for the majority leader and the Democratic leader to determine the specific time and date for the consideration of S. 3059 and that only relevant amendments to the bill be in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object and I shall not object, but I would like to engage in a discussion with the Senator from Arizona. I have some substantive concerns about this bill and I and my staff need some time to review the bill. I have concerns that if we are going to impose criminal penalties in this area, that standard for triggering these penalties is a clear bright line. I am also concerned that the reporting requirements as outlined presently are over broad and unworkable. I am very concerned

about safety and want to ensure that we enact solid workable legislation to protect people. I am not trying to stop this bill, just ensure that it is solid, clean, well thought through legislation.

Mr. MCCAIN. I appreciate the concerns of the Senator from Ohio and I respect his right to object. I intend to work with the Senator to resolve his concerns either before we move the bill or through the amendment process. As I have said from the beginning, all I am seeking is an opportunity for the Senate to address this matter before we adjourn.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I will say to my friend from Arizona, I have been asked by a number of Senators who cannot be here at this hour to object in their behalf. So I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I was told by the majority leader that if Senators had objections, they would come to the floor themselves. That was the word I had from the majority leader, that those who had objections would come themselves. I have his word on that, so I took his word.

I think the Senator from New Mexico should know that was the word I was given by the majority leader of the Senate; That they would have to come down and object to this unanimous consent request themselves. So I hope the Senator from New Mexico will withdraw his objection.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I say again to my distinguished friend from Arizona, I have no such understanding and representatives on the floor of the majority leader's office have asked me to do this.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from New Mexico.

Will the Senator from New Mexico, for the RECORD, say which Member or Members are objecting to this legislation?

Mr. DOMENICI. I do not believe I have to and I will not do that.

Mr. MCCAIN. I did not imply the Senator had to.

Mr. DOMENICI. I understand that. I have been asked to do this. You have asked a number of times, and the objection has been raised just as I am raising it. I regret I have to do it. I am not here suggesting you have not taken due diligence in producing this bill. I am saying in the waning moments of this session, this is what I have been asked to do, and I must object.

I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, it is of interest that the Members on the other side of the aisle have no objection to moving forward with this legislation, this unanimous consent request. Therefore, I intend to continue to propound the unanimous consent request as long as it seems there might be some way to do so.

I say to the Senator from New Mexico—and I say this more in sorrow than anger—by objecting, you do take responsibility in not allowing this legislation to go forward, and I regret that deeply.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. DOMENICI. Before the Senator does that, I ask for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Arizona withhold?

Mr. MCCAIN. I withhold.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank you for your comments. I do not agree with you with reference to my responsibility, but I think we know each other well enough. I know what I had to do, and I know where my responsibility lies, but I thank you very much.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank you for your response. The fact is, the Senator from New Mexico lodged the objection.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator withhold his suggestion and allow me to complete some remarks?

Mr. MCCAIN. Absolutely.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the distinguished Senator.

THE SENATE SAYS GOODBYE TO SENATOR J. ROBERT KERREY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, in this season of fall, the view from our window on the world transforms. As the stoic Greek philosopher Heraclitus has been quoted as saying, "Nothing endures but change."

Since I became a Senator in 1959, I have observed that every 2 years the picture of the United States Senate also changes. This year will be no exception. Before we adjourn, we will wish a fond farewell to the men who have chosen to leave the hallowed halls of the Capitol to travel down new roads that will bring different vistas into view.

Five of our fellow Senators know, even before the election results are tallied in November, that come January 2001—the beginning of the 21st century and the beginning of the third millennium—they will be starting out on a new journey. One of these five has announced that he will take a position that will allow him to continue his advocacy for a fine and noble pursuit, the pursuit of education. In January, Senator BOB KERREY, the Senior Senator from Nebraska, but the youngest Senator who has announced his retirement from the Senate this session, will begin a new life, far from his native Omaha, as president of the New School University of New York City. There he certainly will have a different view from his window on the world, a much different view than the one we see from Capitol Hill.

While many of us were surprised by Senator KERREY's decision not to seek reelection at the youthful age of 57

years, setting off on new adventures is nothing new to Senator KERREY, who has already followed many different paths during his lifetime. While serving in the Senate, BOB KERREY has never feared to take the path less trodden, to follow his convictions and his principles no matter how rocky or lonely the road. His independence of thought and action is legendary.

After earning a Master of Science degree in pharmacy in 1966 from the University of Nebraska, he volunteered for military service in Vietnam. Not only did he volunteer to bear arms for our Nation, he distinguished himself during service. He earned a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, and as a U.S. Navy SEAL. In doing so, BOB KERREY displayed such courage, dedication, and heroism that he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Nixon.

In March 1999, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the events giving rise to his receiving the Medal of Honor, I joined with my colleagues in the Senate to salute him for his courage, his determination, and his heroism. His heroic story is inspiring.

After Senator KERREY's return from service as a U.S. Navy SEAL, he started a chain of restaurants and health clubs in his home State of Nebraska. Then, in 1982, he ran for Governor of Nebraska and won. He served as Governor of Nebraska until 1986, when he announced, to the surprise of many, that despite a 70-percent approval rating, he would not seek another term as Governor. He was prepared to take a turn down a different road, and 2 years later, he won a seat in the United States Senate.

When his face was added to the Senate picture in 1989, he became a member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations. It was my pleasure to welcome him, as I was chairman of that committee at that time. I appreciated the clear vision and the unflappable demeanor that Senator KERREY brought to the committee. In 1997, he chose to leave the Appropriations Committee for the Senate Committee on Finance. The countenance of that important committee will drastically change when we return, God willing, in January, after Senators MOYNIHAN, BRYAN, KERREY, and MACK depart from the Senate, of their own volition and on their own choice.

I commend Senator KERREY for his willingness to work hard on issues of interest to him and to his constituents.

During his 57 years of life, he has thus far been a scholar, a U.S. Navy SEAL, a Medal of Honor recipient, a scholar, a restaurateur, a fitness club founder, Governor of Nebraska, and a United States Senator. He has made his life unique. I wish the Senator from Nebraska well as he sets off down the path for his next adventure. Knowing Senator KERREY's propensity for taking his own road, I shall close with the following lines of verse written by Robert Frost. We are all familiar with that great poem, "The Road Not Taken."

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

PLANNING FOR OUR ENERGY FUTURE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, once again a critical region of the Middle East is engaged in violent clashes. Over the last week, the death toll in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has risen to 67 lives lost. I know that Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PLO Leader Yasser Arafat made heroic efforts to try to reach a peace agreement these last few months. They even met for part of the time in my own State of West Virginia. With U.S. support and encouragement, the Israelis and Palestinians stood at the brink of a resolution, and they were as close as they have ever been to resolving a very longstanding dispute in that ancient, volatile, and embattled part of our world. Though I hope these two peoples will return to the negotiating table, today that opportunity appears lost.

This disheartening incident again illustrates that the Middle East peace is very fragile and could erupt like flash powder. While Saddam Hussein has been quelled for the time being, the world must always be on the watch. We do not know if the Israelis and Palestinians will reach a peace accord. Americans are affected in many ways. We have security and family interests in this region of the world, and the United States gets much of its energy resources from there as well. The U.S., our European allies, and many other industrial countries are tethered to the Middle Eastern oil chain. If we are ever going to break that stranglehold, then it is time that we take action here at home.

Over the past 18 months, the national average price of gasoline has risen from under \$1 per gallon to \$1.52 per gallon this week. As winter approaches and crude oil inventories remain at record low levels, both gasoline and fuel prices are expected to increase further. Americans are growing increasingly concerned about the seemingly endless volatility in our energy markets.

What we are seeing, Mr. President, in the fluctuation of energy prices is a textbook study of how supply and demand can affect energy prices. First, the Organization of Petroleum Export-

ing Countries agreed last year to reduce crude oil production, thus increasing the cost of producing gasoline. Secondly, gasoline refineries, which had shut down some operations when crude oil prices fell to record lows in 1998, suddenly faced shortages of production capacity to produce gasoline and heating oil when demand spiked earlier this year.

In response, the administration has successfully lobbied for an increase by OPEC in crude oil production over the past year. In March, OPEC's decision to increase crude oil production temporarily reduced the cost of gasoline, but prices increased again going into the summer driving season as demand for gasoline increased. Gasoline prices decreased in late summer, but, as winter approaches and the expected demand for crude oil, heating oil, and gasoline increases, prices could very likely climb again. These are the ups and downs of the energy roller coaster that has taken the American public for a ride.

To make matters worse, this volatility in gasoline prices is occurring as the United States prepares itself for the upcoming Presidential election. This has added fuel to the fire as Members of Congress, the administration, and politicians everywhere position themselves politically to avoid blame for the spike in energy prices. Unfortunately, such positioning is usually accompanied by a myriad of snake-oil remedies and miracle cures that do little more than lull the American public into believing that the problem is being fixed when, in fact, the problem is being exacerbated.

Two weeks ago, the administration announced such a proposal, against the better judgment of the U.S. Treasury Secretary and the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, that would authorize the sale of 30 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve over the next month. This is the same petroleum reserve that was created in response to the 1973 Arab oil embargo to store oil in case of a national emergency, such as a war in the Middle East. Like the Army, you hope never to use the reserve. But, if you need to, it should be big enough to do the job.

Yet, the release of oil from this reserve is unlikely to have a significant effect on prices at the pump. The United States consumes approximately 19 million to 20 million barrels of crude oil per day. The administration's proposal would provide for an additional one million barrels per day. Such a small amount of oil is unlikely to have much of an effect on gasoline prices, especially in light of the additional 800,000 barrels per day of crude oil that will be produced by OPEC.

But what is worse is that this sort of intervention in the domestic energy market, which may seem simple, could actually be self defeating. If refiners expect more oil to be released from the reserve, these shrewd businessmen may